

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 15, 2017

CONTACTS:

Maya van Rossum Delaware Riverkeeper Network 215.369.1188x102 keepermaya@delawareriverkeeper.org

Wes Gillingham, Catskill Mountainkeeper, 845.901.1029, wes@catskillmountainkeeper.org

B. Arrindell, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, 845.252.6677 dcs@DamascusCitizens.org

Doug O'Malley, Environment New Jersey, 917.449.6812 domalley@environmentnewjersey.org

David Pringle, Clean Water Action New Jersey, 732.996.4288 dpringle@cleanwater.org

Tracy Carluccio, DRN, 215.369.1188x104, tracy@delawareriverkeeper.org

Demonstration calls for Ban on Fracking in the Delaware River Watershed

Public from numerous states and multiple constituencies floods meeting to tell Delaware River Basin Commission to protect the river watershed with a ban

Washington Crossing, PA – Today residents from all states represented on the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) flooded its meeting in Washington Crossing State Park to call for an immediate ban on all drilling and fracking in the Delaware River Watershed.

Since 2010 the DRBC has prohibited natural gas extraction projects in the Delaware River Basin while they study its potential impacts on water resources, a *de-facto* moratorium that does not allow permits to be issued until natural gas regulations are adopted. The DRBC almost adopted regulations in 2011 but its voting members cancelled the meeting where the vote would have occurred amid overwhelming public opposition. However, DRBC staff has raised alarm bells with recent signals that the DRBC may be moving to adopt regulations and lift the current moratorium.

Today people from all four states whose waters flow to the Delaware River – Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware – peacefully filled the public meeting room with signs and banners to show their opposition to fracking in the Delaware River Watershed and signaling their determination to insist the DRBC not only maintain the moratorium but enact a permanent fracking ban.

Since 2010, scientific analyses, public health statistics and peer reviewed studies, the experience of communities where fracking is occurring, and government records show that the impacts of gas and oil development significantly harm the environment including our water, air, habitats and communities' health, despite regulatory controls. The overwhelming weight of the evidence shows that shale gas cannot be extracted or developed safely, making this the right time to enact a Watershed ban on all gas development.

"The Delaware River Watershed is the source of drinking water for 17 million people and provides exceptional water quality and irreplaceable natural assets that the river community is striving to protect through a ban on fracking," **said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.**

"Allowing fracking in the Delaware River watershed would further endanger the health of some of the region's most densely populated and overburdened communities," **said Coryn Wolk of EDGE, Philadelphia.**

"Given the threats facing the Delaware River, it's time the DRBC codify what they already know -- fracking is not consistent with DRBC's mission, that's why Governor Cuomo has banned it, that's why DRBC put in a temporary moratorium, and that's why DRBC should make it a permanent ban now," **said David Pringle, NJ Campaign Director of Clean Water Action** which has members in all 4 states in the watershed.

"We're standing together united calling on you to make the moratorium on fracking in the Delaware Basin permanent. The people demand it and the River needs it. You must protect our environment and the drinking water for 17 million people. DRBC, Don't Ruin the Basin, Commissioners! Keep the frack out of the Delaware!," **said Jeff Tittel, Director of the New Jersey Sierra Club.**

"For seven years, we have had a commitment from the DRBC to maintain a fracking moratorium in the Delaware watershed. In those years, the science has gotten clearer that fracking represents a direct threat to drinking water quality. Lifting the moratorium on fracking in the watershed would be a direct attack against the watershed's ecosystem and our drinking water. With the newly arrived Trump Administration, it is critical for all the states in the watershed - including New Jersey - to tell the fracking industry the Delaware River watershed is off limits to dangerous and dirty drilling," **said Doug O'Malley, Director, Environment New Jersey's director.**

"New York State's multi-year comprehensive EIS and health studies overwhelmingly concluded that fracking was dangerous to our health and detrimental to the environment and posed catastrophic risk to water resources. Several hundred thousand comments and hundreds of scientific studies were part of the review that led to the NYS Ban. Drilling anywhere in the DRB would be just as harmful as in NYS", **said Barbara Arrindell, Director, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability.**

"Over 1000 peer-reviewed studies on fracking have been published in the past seven years, most documenting fracking-related contamination of air, water and serious health impacts to humans and animals. New York State has a ban on high volume hydro-fracking because it is unsafe and ,there is no set of regulations in the country that has been able to protect communities from the devastation caused by drilling and

fracking so it is time to implement a fracking Ban in the Delaware River basin," **said Wes Gillingham, Catskill Mountainkeeper.**

"The Governors of the four states that flow to the Delaware River continue to maintain a moratorium on fracking since 2010 while they investigate its potential to harm the watershed. It makes no sense for the DRBC staff to be pushing to overturn this protective stand, especially since the devastating impacts of drilling are now beyond debate. DRBC needs to take responsibility by banning fracking in the watershed now," **said Tracy Carluccio, Deputy Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

A network of organizations, community members, and grass roots groups representing tens of thousands of members took part in today's action for a fracking ban (in alphabetical order): Berks Gas Truth, Bucks County Environmental Coalition, Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy, Catskill Mountainkeeper, Damascus Citizens for Sustainability, Clean Water Action New Jersey, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, EDGE Philadelphia, Environment New Jersey, Food and Water Watch, Frack Action, NYH2O, Sierra Club - New Jersey Chapter, Sierra Club - Pennsylvania Chapter, 350.org - Bucks County.

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